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USSR-Cambodia: Premier Kosygin's telegram to Cambodian Prince Sihanouk buys more time for Moscow to sort out the implications of the Indochina situation.

The Kosygin message, announced by TASS yesterday, is the first direct gesture of support that Sihanouk has received from the USSR. It falls well short, however, of the full diplomatic recognition already extended his "Royal Government of National Union" by Hanoi and Peking. It is addressed to "Mr." Norodom Sihanouk, and it congratulates him not on the formation of his government-in-exile, but on the "United Front" which he established soon after his ouster.

Moscow's failure to recognize Sihanouk's "government" is evidence of its determination to tread a cautious path in dealing with Indochina developments. It reflects in part Soviet uncertainty about the orientation and prospects for success of a Sihanouk-led liberation movement and, more importantly, concern over the nature of his relationship with the Chinese. A common theme in the comments of Soviet diplomats on Indochina developments since the ouster of Sihanouk has been the fear that China will be able to exploit the situation. Sihanouk's dependence upon the Chinese has increased Soviet anxiety.

It will be difficult for the USSR to stay out of step with Hanoi for long on a policy matter of this importance. Sihanouk quickly accepted the sign of Soviet support, but made it clear in a telegram to Premier Kosygin that he was formally requesting official recognition of his government-in-exile. This move will not make Moscow's position any easier, as it clearly prefers to withhold its full support at least for the time being.

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¶ Lebanon-Israel: Tel Aviv's thrust into southern Lebanon may temporarily deter fedayeen activity but is likely to lead in the long run to further deterioration of the situation.

In contrast to fedayeen claims of heavy fighting and high casualties, Israeli officials appear to be trying to depict their day-long "combing operation" in southern Lebanon as limited. They describe it as a "screening" action designed to capture fedayeen and to destroy their bases. Tel Aviv has given no figures of guerrillas killed and says only that Israeli forces took 11 prisoners and destroyed some 40 buildings and ten vehicles, while suffering 11 wounded themselves. They also warn that much stronger ripostes are in the offing if fedayeen action from Lebanon continues.

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With the Lebanese cabinet delicately balanced between pro- and anti-fedayeen factions, the Lebanese Army's communiqés may have been an attempt to head off public criticism of the government for not acting forcefully enough against the Israelis. It is possible, however, that a fedayeen-led outcry may still bring down the cabinet. The US Embassy in Beirut believes that in any case the Lebanese public is likely to blame the US for not stopping the attack and that some groups may even accuse the US of complicity with Tel Aviv.

Over the longer term, events in Lebanon are likely to parallel the developments of the past few]

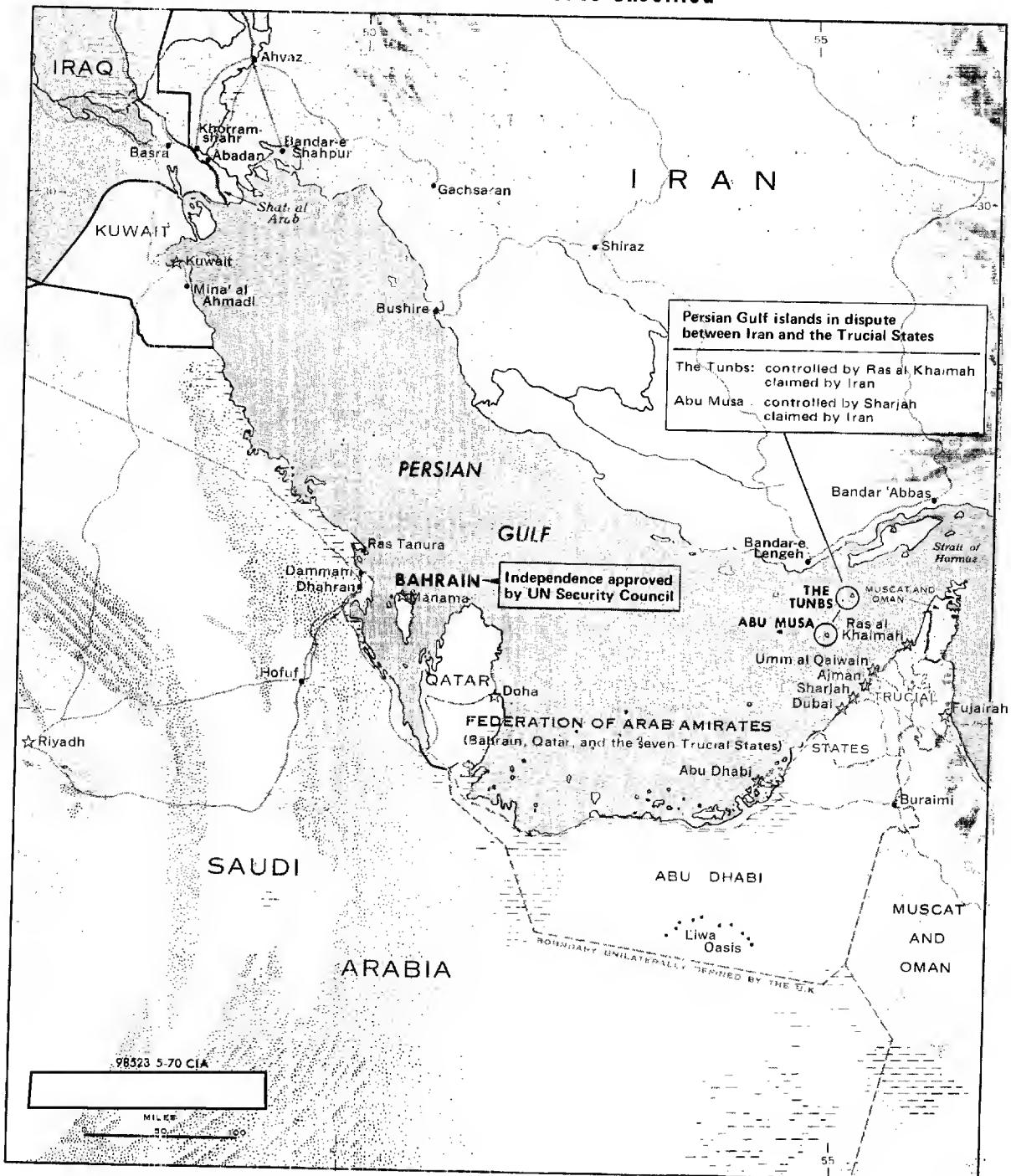
years in Jordan. The Israeli attack is unlikely to deter further fedayeen incursions into Israel for long. Fearful of initiating yet another government-fedayeen confrontation with its accompanying domestic political problems, Beirut will probably not attempt to take any strong measures of its own to control the fedayeen. This in turn is likely to lead to further Israeli air and ground strikes against fedayeen concentrations in Lebanon.

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Iranian Claim to BAHRAIN Resolved : Other Issues Unsettled



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Iran-Bahrain-UN: The UN Security Council action approving independence for Bahrain ends the 150-year-old Iranian claim to the Persian Gulf island, but other territorial conflicts remain unresolved.

A representative of Secretary General Thant, after discussions with the Bahrainis, reported that the majority of the population preferred independence to association with Iran. Tehran had agreed in advance to accept the report once it was approved by the UN. Council approval on Monday was unanimous.

Settlement of the Bahrain dispute removes another obstacle to Iranian-Arab cooperation in the gulf. Conflicting claims to three other tiny but strategic gulf islands remain unresolved, however. Iran is determined to gain at least de facto control of the two Tunbs and Abu Musa, which control access to the gulf and are also claimed by the sheikdoms of Ras al-Khaimah and Sharjah respectively.

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South Vietnam: Some Communist units within South Vietnam are planning offensive operations to take advantage of the diversion of allied forces to the Cambodian front.

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Numerous references to the deployment of allied forces to the Cambodian border have cropped up in captured documents, prisoner and rallier statements [redacted]. In many cases, enemy units were directed to try to strike in areas where allied strength has been cut back.

It is uncertain how much of an effort the Communists can put together in the immediate future, as this will depend on the readiness of different units and other local conditions. Nevertheless, the Communists are probably anxious to get something going. They may believe that if it is not severe enough to force the early withdrawal of US or South Vietnamese troops from the border regions, the effort might at least score some tactical success against lightly defended areas while upward of 57,000 allied troops are committed to Cambodian operations. [redacted]

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Laos: Communist military activity continues to focus on the Bolovens Plateau, where the enemy has succeeded in dispersing government guerrillas holding Site 38. The guerrillas are now regrouping in an effort to reoccupy this key position some ten miles northwest of the provincial capital of Attapeu. In the north, a few minor clashes marked an otherwise quiet day at Long Tieng.

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USSR: Some of the Soviet naval units that participated in exercise "Ocean" are subsequently showing the flag at several foreign ports. A cruiser and a guided missile frigate entered the harbor at Cherbourg, France on 8 May and three other groups of ships are visiting the African ports of Algiers, Casablanca, and Lagos. In the Caribbean, a force of two diesel submarines, a guided missile cruiser, and a destroyer are currently operating south of Jamaica and may visit Cuba and some West Indian ports. Last year Soviet naval units made good-will calls at three Caribbean ports.

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UN - Middle East: The US mission at the UN has learned that the Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has decided to defer most of its planned cuts in services to the refugee camps of the Middle East. The cutbacks scheduled for 1 May had been protested bitterly by Jordanian and Lebanese officials, who fear that a reduction in services would facilitate fedayeen recruitment in the camps. UNRWA will face a large deficit if cutbacks are delayed, although it hopes that a special appeal by Secretary General Thant for funds will help ease its financial problems. Prospects for a favorable response are not good, however, and there appears to be no possibility that UNRWA can avoid eventually instituting substantial cuts in services.

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